

Amendments to the Claims

This Listing of the Claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in this application:

Listing of the Claims

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method of cleaning shoes in a vertical axis washing machine, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a washing machine having a vertical axis tub;
- (b) providing at least one shoe having a sole;
- (c) providing a device for orienting said at least one shoe in the tub of said washing machine, which maintains said at least one shoe in a particular orientation throughout the washing process;
- (d) positioning said device in the tub of said washing machine with said at least one shoe therein; and
- (e) operating said washing machine through a washing process.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The method of Claim 1 wherein ~~said washing machine is a vertical axis washing machine, and~~ said at least one shoe is placed in said device with said sole facing upward.

Claim 3 (Original): The method of Claim 2 wherein the washing machine operates through a spin cycle, and the washing machine has an agitator inside the tub, and the agitator rotates during the spin cycle of the washing machine, and said at least one shoe is oriented so that the toe of said at least one shoe is pointing in the same direction that the agitator rotates during the spin cycle of the washing machine.

Claim 4 (Original): The method of Claim 1 wherein the device for orienting said at least one shoe in the tub of the washing machine comprises a flexible bag having at least one pocket for maintaining said at least one shoe in a particular orientation.

Claim 5 (Original): The method of Claim 1 wherein the washing machine has an agitator, and the device for orienting said at least one shoe in the tub of the washing machine comprises a plurality of flexible mesh pockets that are at least indirectly joined together that fit around the washing machine agitator, and are held in place on the agitator.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A device for orienting a shoe in the tub of a vertical axis washing machine, said device comprising a flexible bag, the flexible bag including a pocket holder for at least one shoe, ~~that maintains~~ adapted to maintain said at least one shoe in the washing machine with its sole facing upward.

Claim 7 (Cancelled).

Claim 8 (Original): A flexible bag for maintaining shoes in a desired orientation in a washing machine, said flexible bag comprising:

at least one web of material that is arranged to have two opposed portions wherein said opposed portions are joined together to form several pockets, said pockets being defined by side walls, a closed bottom, and ends, and said pockets provide at least two openings for inserting shoes.

Claim 9 (Original): The flexible bag of Claim 8 comprising an even number of pockets for shoes.

Claim 10 (Original): The flexible bag of Claim 9 comprising four shoe pockets.

Claim 11 (Original): The flexible bag of Claim 8 further comprising at least one component joined thereto for retaining the pockets in a particular relationship.

Claim 12 (Original): The flexible bag of Claim 11 which is configured so that the pockets are disposed at least partially around the washing machine agitator when said flexible bag is placed in a washing machine.

Claim 13 (Original): The flexible bag of Claim 11 wherein said at least one component comprises a snap fastening system.

Claim 14 (Original): The flexible bag of Claim 8 further comprising a stiffer portion thereof which stiffer portion assists in holding the shoes in a particular position within the pockets.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): A flexible bag structure having at least two pockets for holding shoes in a washing machine, wherein at least two of said pockets are joined to each other directly or indirectly.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): A method of cleaning shoes in a vertical axis washing machine, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a washing machine having a vertical axis tub;

(b) providing at least one shoe having a sole;

- (c) providing a device for orienting said at least one shoe in the tub of said washing machine, which maintains said at least one shoe in a particular orientation throughout the washing process;
- (d) positioning said device in the tub of said washing machine
- (e) placing said at least one shoe in said device; and
- (f) operating said washing machine through a washing process.

Claim 17 (New): The structure of Claim 15, wherein each pocket includes a retainer comprising at least one pleat in a wall of the pocket for retaining a shoe therein.

Claim 18 (New): The structure of Claim 15, wherein each pocket includes a retainer comprising an elastic band at a pocket opening for retaining a shoe therein.